

Minutes of the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland

November 7, 2018

Diana Purnell, President
Theodore J. Elder, Vice President
Anthony W. Bertino, Jr.
Madison J. Bunting, Jr.
James C. Church
Merrill W. Lockfaw, Jr.
Joseph M. Mitrecic

Following a motion by Commissioner Bertino, seconded by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners unanimously voted to meet in closed session at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room to discuss legal and personnel matters permitted under the provisions of Section 3-305(b)(1), (3), and (7) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and to perform administrative functions. Also present at the closed session were Harold L. Higgins, Chief Administrative Officer; Kelly Shannahan, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer; Maureen Howarth, County Attorney; Kim Moses, Public Information Officer; Stacey Norton, Human Resources Director; Tom Perlozzo, Recreation and Parks Director; Ed Tudor, Development Review and Permitting Director; Phil Thompson, Finance Officer; and Kathryn Gordon, Economic Development Deputy Director. Topics discussed and actions taken included: hiring Tyler Marlott as a Roads Worker I for the Roads Division and James Dinkins as a Maintenance Worker III for the Maintenance Division; approving personnel changes in the Water and Wastewater Division of Public Works to include eliminating two vacant Maintenance Worker positions, and one vacant Construction Supervisor position, reclassifying two Equipment Operators to Heavy Equipment Operators, and continuing to advertise to fill two Maintenance Worker II positions; denying a request to post to fill a vacancy for a Receptionist in Development Review and Permitting; considering acquisition of real property for public purposes; receiving legal advice from counsel; and performing administrative functions.

After the closed session, the Commissioners reconvened in open session. Commissioner Purnell called the meeting to order and announced the topics discussed during the morning closed session.

The Commissioners reviewed and approved the October 23, 2018 open session minutes as presented and closed session minutes as revised.

The Commissioners presented a proclamation recognizing November as National Adoption Month to raise awareness of Worcester County youth who need stable homes with loving parents who will protect, nurture, and support them as they grow, and to honor those who have dedicated their lives to serving these children. The Commissioners extended their gratitude to Worcester County Department of Social Services (DSS) Director Roberta Baldwin and her staff for their efforts to bring stability back into the lives of children who through no fault of their

own have been removed from their families of origin.

In a related matter, the Commissioners presented a commendation to Steve and Tina Collins, the 2018 Worcester County Adoptive Parents of the Year, for adopting five siblings, three boys and two girls, and for providing Worcester sons and daughters with a forever home.

The Commissioners met with Superintendent of Schools Louis Taylor to review and discuss the Board of Educations's (BOE's) proposed FY20 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) request. Mr. Taylor thanked the Commissioners for their support and for partnering with the BOE to continue to provide Worcester County students with exceptional educational opportunities. Mr. Taylor stated that the CIP, which has been developed in accordance with Maryland Interagency Committee for Public School Construction (IAC) regulations, is a planning document, and he is not here seeking funding for any project today. He further advised that the CIP is consistent with the Worcester County CIP and incorporates all prior recommendations of the County Commissioners regarding future school construction needs. He then reviewed the proposed CIP, which includes replacing Showell Elementary School (SES) at an estimated cost of \$47.5 million, with total requested State funding of \$8,672,000 and County funding of \$38,880,420, and for which construction began September 29, 2018; Pocomoke Middle School Systemic Roof Replacement at an estimated cost of \$2,649,000 in FY21; Stephen Decatur Middle School (SDMS) 16,300-square-foot addition at a total estimated cost of \$9,205,000, with requested planning approval for FY22; Snow Hill Middle School/Cedar Chapel Special School Systemic Roof Replacement at an estimated cost of \$3,506,000 in FY23; Pocomoke Elementary School (PES) Systemic Roof Replacement at an estimated cost of \$1,787,000 in FY24; and Buckingham Elementary School (BES) Renovation/Addition or Replacement at an estimated cost of \$54,259,000 for planning in FY23 and funding in FY25.

Commissioner Bertino noted that the State funding allotted to the County appears to be grossly unfair, since the State formula calls for a 50/50 cost share in Worcester County, but actual funding is much less. In response to a question by Commissioner Bertino, Facilities Manager Joe Price advised that State funding for school construction is calculated at a capacity rate of 25 students per classroom, while the student to teacher ratio in Worcester County is based on their continuing initiative to maintain smaller class sizes. In response to a question by Commissioner Elder, Mr. Taylor stated that the State funds roughly 80% of the budgets for the Somerset County BOE and Wicomico County BOE, but only 18% of the Worcester County BOE budget based on the State's wealth formula, which is skewed due to non-resident properties in Ocean City.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the Commissioners unanimously approved the BOE FY20 CIP as presented.

In follow-up to a request by Commissioner Elder, Information Technology Director Brian Jones provided an update on the status of broadband in Worcester County and steps needed to extend broadband to underserved residents (those who generally have options to acquire broadband) and more importantly currently unserved residents (those with little or no options for internet services). Economic Development Deputy Director Kathryn Gordon was also in attendance. Mr. Jones advised that in 2015 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) changed the definition of broadband by raising the minimum download speeds from 4MBPS (megabytes per second) to 25 MBPS, and the minimum upload speed from 1 MBPS to 3 MBPS,

effectively tripling the number of U.S. households without broadband access as identified under the new definition. He noted that in his discussions with State and local government officials he learned that Sussex County, Delaware recently initiated a broadband project. He advised that Sussex County officials refrained from signing any franchise agreements and instead issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) that drew interest from five wireless broadband companies, and they budgeted \$1 million to pay for the tower space rental fees and other incidentals, such as permitting and electricity costs, for these companies for a period of one year, with the hope that in the following years these providers will continue to offer broadband service to their area. Mr. Jones noted, however, that the Sussex County project is in its infancy, and there are no statistics on how many residents of this program were previously unserved. He advised he would follow the progress of this project to determine its success and whether Worcester County might benefit from a similar project. In the meantime, he recommended the County hire a consultant to identify Worcester County residents who are currently unserved or underserved for broadband.

Mr. Jones stated that the Maryland Governor's Office is working with all Maryland counties that are struggling to obtain the information needed to provide internet coverage throughout the State. He stated that a first step in the process for Worcester County would be to hire a consultant at a cost of roughly \$30,000 to determine those who are unserved and underserved with high speed broadband services and to determine the primary needs and expectations of the residents of Worcester County with regard to data consumption. On a positive note, he stated that there is fiber on the Eastern Shore that is administered by the Maryland Broadband Cooperative (MBC) in conjunction with the Maryland Department of Information Technology (DoIT), as well as Choptank Electric, to serve as the necessary backbone, though the primary hurdle would be identifying how to extend service from this fiber to the last mile (homes and offices). He stated that, perhaps, the County could attract the interest of wireless providers that would be willing to work with MBC, Choptank, and DoIT to provide services to residents. In response to a question by Commissioner Bertino, Mr. Jones stated that it would cost millions of dollars just to start an internet project. He stated that Sussex County succeeded in attracting internet providers because they budgeted \$1 million to help cover some of those start-up costs. However, it remains to be seen if these companies will continue to offer service in that area once county funding is no longer available.

Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Elder, the Commissioners unanimously authorized staff to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a consultant to conduct a study of Worcester County residents to determine those who are unserved and underserved with high speed broadband services and to determine the primary needs and expectations of the residents of Worcester County with regard to data consumption for the Commissioners review and approval at a future meeting.

Mike Pennington, who will be retiring as Executive Director of the Tri-County Council (TCC) of the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland on December 31, 2018, introduced incoming TCC Director Gregory Padgham. The Commissioners thanked Mr. Pennington for his years of service and welcomed Mr. Padgham.

The Commissioners reviewed and discussed a board appointment.

Upon a nomination by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to appoint Melanie Pursel to the Workforce Development Board of the Lower Shore Workforce

Alliance (LSWA) for a four-year term expiring September 30, 2022 to replace Geoffrey Failla whose term expired.

Human Resources Director Stacey Norton introduced Kevin Candy, the new Safety Coordinator, to the Commissioners. The Commissioners welcomed Mr. Candy.

Pursuant to the request of Ms. Norton and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the Commissioners unanimously authorized the County's benefit broker/consultant, PSA Insurance and Financials, to conduct a RFP for pharmacy benefit manager and dental vendors.

Pursuant to the request of Housing Program Administrator Jo Ellen Bynum and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved bid specifications for a housing rehabilitation project in West Ocean City to be funded through the County's current Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

Pursuant to the request of Local Management Board Director Jessica Sexauer and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously authorized Commission President Purnell to sign the Community Partnership Agreement between the County, the Local Management Board (LMB), and the Governor's Office for Children for FY19 with grant funds of \$832,918 to be used beginning July 1, 2018 to assist The Cricket Center, Comprehensive Parenting Program Initiative, Building Bridges, Worcester Education, Employment, and Empowerment, Youth Connection Center, and Local Care Team Coordinator.

Pursuant to the request of Budget Officer Kathy Whited and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously authorized Commission President Purnell to sign the Certification for Cooperative Local-State Library Aid Programs for FY19, with State aid of \$159,476 and County funding of \$2,642,946 for the County Library. Ms. Whited advised that other expenses include \$1,264,639 for the Ocean Pines Library heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) project.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Colonel Doug Dods of the Sheriff's Office and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the Commissioners unanimously authorized the filing of a State Aid for Police Protection Fund application for FY20 from the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, with anticipated funding of \$153,146 to be used exclusively to provide adequate police protection throughout the County. Colonel Dods explained that the exact amount of funding provided would not be known until approved; however, FY18 funding was \$173,251.

Pursuant to the request of Environmental Programs Director Bob Mitchell and upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners unanimously authorized Commission President Purnell to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the FY19 Dividing Creek Rural Legacy Area (RLA) Project between the Worcester County Commissioners, the Somerset County Commissioners, and the Lower Shore Land Trust, Inc. (LSLT). Mr. Mitchell advised that with the execution of this MOU, sponsorship of the program will change from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to the LSLT, with Worcester County Government to remain the grantee and fully responsible for easements in Worcester County. The Commissioners further

approved the draft letter to Stacy J. Schaefer, Associate Director of Land Acquisition and Planning Unit for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) confirming this change.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Mitchell and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously authorized Commission President Purnell to sign the FY19 Dividing Creek Rural Legacy Area (RLA) Grant Agreement for funding of \$1,060,000 for the Dividing Creek RLA. Mr. Mitchell stated that the grant funding will be used to purchase two to four conservation easements in Somerset and Worcester Counties from willing landowners and will also cover County administrative costs.

The Commissioners met with Mr. Mitchell to discuss plans by Phil Houck, owner of certain unimproved real property located in Berlin and identified on Tax Map 25 as Parcel 460, to obtain the necessary regulatory permits to develop a commercial warehouse facility on his property and to relocate the Kitts Branch Tax Ditch, which is part of the Kitts Branch Public Drainage Association (PDA). Mr. Mitchell stated that PDAs are independent political subdivisions of the State, and their purpose is to establish and maintain drainage systems. He stated that the State allows these managers to request that the Commissioners appoint a subsequent board of viewers to determine if the original determination regarding which lands have benefitted from the improvements have changed and to report their findings to the Commissioners. He stated that the steps necessary for the property owner to move forward include the following: the owner to prepare a detailed engineering report and plan, and the Commissioners to appoint a new Board of Viewers consisting of three to five impartial individuals who reside in the vicinity of the drainage association, with that new board to review and submit a final report with recommendations back to the Commissioners so that they may advertise and conduct a public hearing on the matter prior to voting to approve or disapprove the relocation plan.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to appoint John Ross, Robert E. Shockley, Alan H. Hudson, R. Lee Gilliss, and David Bradford, Sr. as members of the Board of Viewers for the Kitts Branch Tax Ditch relocation application process for the property identified on Tax Map 25 as Parcel 460 in Berlin, in accordance with State law. The board will review and submit a final report and recommendation to the Commissioners regarding the proposed relocation to protect the property owners in the Kitts Branch Public Drainage Association, ensure the work proposed is feasible, and that it will benefit the public and promote the public health, safety and welfare, and will benefit the land to be affected by the drainage project.

The Commissioners met with Public Works Director John Tustin to review a request from Dane Bauer, President of the Lighthouse Sound Property Owner's Association, outlining concerns about speeding traffic within the subdivision and requesting the speed limit be reduced on all roads within the Lighthouse Sound community from 30 miles per hour (mph) to 25 mph. Mr. Tustin stated that a speed study is not warranted at this time, as County staff agrees that the reduction in speed is warranted. Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to reduce the speed limit on all roads within the Lighthouse Sound community from 30 mph to 25 mph and to request that the Sheriff's Office begin enforcing this new speed limit once the new speed limit signs are posted.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners unanimously authorized staff to negotiate with fencing contractors to supply and install the required fencing, gates, operating controllers, and hardware for improvements to the Judges' secured parking lot. Mr. Tustin stated that a bid opening for this project was scheduled for October 29, 2018; however, no local fencing contractors bid on the project, as the project was too small for general contractors, and fencing contractors could not perform the landscaping and parking lot paving aspects of the project. He further advised that Public Works will utilize in-house staff to remove the existing landscaped areas and investigate the possibility of using brick pavers or some other method to stabilize the areas underneath the existing landscaping to provide a secured and hard surface for vehicles.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved bid specifications to replace the 1964 heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) system in the Court House. Mr. Tustin stated that funds of \$600,000 are available in the budget for this project.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners unanimously awarded the low bid for the purchase of one 2019 John Deere Model 670G Motor Grader at a base price of \$240,747.73, plus Option 1 (V-Plow) for an additional \$12,028, and Option 2 (Joystick Hydraulic Control) for an additional \$22,716.75, for a total delivered price of \$275,492.48.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners unanimously approved Change Order No. 1 for the construction of the piping and controls for connection of the Mystic Harbour Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) effluent to the Eagle's Landing Golf Course at a total additional cost of \$17,598.42 to cover the following five items: removal of up to four trees at a cost of \$862; install a power supply at a cost of \$3,633.92; install additional circuit panel power pack and circuit for sump pump at a cost of \$1,837.50; replace 60 feet of the drain line between the holding pond and the spray irrigation pump station and redirect the irrigation piping under the drain at a total cost of \$7,129; and modify the pipe outlet structure at the golf course at a total cost of \$4,136. Public Works Deputy Director John Ross advised that project contingency funds are available to cover these additional expenses.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners voted 6-1, with Commissioner Elder voting in opposition, to accept the best proposal from George, Miles, and Buhr (GMB), LLC of Salisbury, Maryland for engineering design and bidding services for the equalization tank rehabilitation project in the Riddle Farm Sanitary Service Area (SSA) at a not to exceed cost of \$24,550, plus reimbursable expenses. Mr. Tustin stated that the estimated cost to rehabilitate the tank is \$250,000, and he proposed these funds be included in the upcoming bond issue planned for the Showell Elementary School (SES) replacement project, with funding by a short-term loan from the General Fund in the interim. He advised that, though Davis Bowen & Friedel (DBF) submitted a proposal at a total cost of \$17,300, GMB has been involved in this project since the original construction, making them

more familiar with the history of this tank, and they authored the report recommending the improvements. In response to a question by Commissioner Bertino, Chief Administrative Officer Harold Higgins advised that it is standard practice for the County to include smaller enterprise fund projects like this in bond funding.

Commissioner Elder stated that GMB's proposed rate was 40% higher than that of DBF, and for that reason he could not vote to accept their proposal.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously approved Central Landfill Cell 5 Construction Change Order No. 4 - Weather Delays, to add 19 non-compensable calendar days to the construction schedule to establish a new completion date of December 2, 2018 to account for adverse weather days.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Elder, the Commissioners unanimously accepted the proposal from EA Engineering, Science, and Technology of Hunt Valley, Maryland for Cobalt Evaluation at the Central Landfill in Newark on a time and materials basis at an estimated cost of \$14,705.90.

The Commissioners met with Development Review and Permitting (DRP) Director Ed Tudor to review the nuisance abatement request for two rapidly deteriorating structures (a parsonage and former Grace Tabernacle of Deliverance Church) and the uncontrolled growth of vegetation on property located at 5492 and 5496 Stockton Road and more specifically identified on Tax Map 86 as Parcel 134. Mr. Tudor stated that both structures have significant roofing problems, and the entire property, including the cemetery, is overgrown. Furthermore, the specific nature of the nuisance is the uncontrolled growth of grass, weeds or other rank vegetation to a height exceeding one foot, and the unattended and uninhabitable dilapidated structures on the property, which are beyond reasonable hope of rehabilitation or restoration, and which constitutes a nuisance under the provisions of Subsections PH 1-101(a)(1) and (11) of the Public Health Article. He explained that Donald and Lucy Redden of Laurel, Delaware, who represent the church, are both in poor health and do not have the financial means to do anything with the property, nor have they been successful in selling it. Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the Commissioners unanimously declared the property to be a nuisance pursuant to Section PH 1-101(a)(1) and (11).

In response to a question by Commissioner Bertino, Mr. Tudor agreed to investigate whether this nuisance can be abated via a controlled burn of the structures.

The Commissioners met with Mr. Tudor to review nuisance conditions on a property located at 10720 St. Martins Neck Road in Bishopville and more specifically identified on Tax Map 9 as Parcel 152, which consist of a two-story dwelling built in the 1920s, which some years ago was stripped and gutted with apparent intentions of fixing it up, and a somewhat later single-story addition. Mr. Tudor stated that work on the two-story structure ceased soon after it had begun and only minor work has been completed on this section in recent years. If determined by the Commissioners, the precise nature of the nuisance could be the unattended and uninhabitable dilapidated portion of the structure on the property that is beyond reasonable hope of rehabilitation or restoration, which could constitute a nuisance under the provisions of Subsections PH 1-101(a)(1) and (14) of the County Code. Mr. Tudor stated that the single-story

side of the structure was and continues to be occupied. However, it is difficult to ascertain without a detailed inspection if the two-story section can be removed without damaging the occupied portion. At the very least, Mr. Tudor recommended against removal of the two-story section while the single-story section is occupied. For that reason, he recommended that the property owners be given more than 30 days to remedy the situation or relocate the occupants from the one occupied portion should the Commissioners find the structure meets the definition of a ramshackled or decayed structure as outlined in Section PH 1-101(a)(11) of the Public Health Article of the County Code.

Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the Commissioners unanimously declared the structure to be ramshackled or decayed and beyond reasonable hope of rehabilitation or restoration pursuant to Section PH 1-101(a)(11) of the Public Health Article of the County Code.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the Commissioners unanimously voted to schedule a public hearing on the proposed comprehensive (sectional) reclassification of the E-1 Estate and A-1 Agricultural Zoned Properties that are located north of Grays Corner Road on the easterly and westerly sides of McAllister Road, northerly and southerly sides of Griffin Road, and the westerly side of MD Rt. 589 (Racetrack Road) in the Third Tax District of Worcester County on December 18, 2018. Mr. Tudor advised that the Planning Commission has recommended that the subject properties retain their existing E-1 and A-1 zoning classifications.

Pursuant to the request of Emergency Services Director Fred Webster and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the Commissioners unanimously approved the application for Emergency Medical Dispatch Training Grant from the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems in the amount of \$3,000 to be used for Communications Clerk training.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Webster and upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners unanimously approved additional funding of \$7,380 to upgrade the Superion Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) software in Emergency Services as an authorized over-expenditure, contingent upon the satisfaction of County Attorney Maureen Howarth with minor corrections to be made to the contract. Mr. Webster explained that the FY19 budget included funding for a fire reporting software program, as requested by the fire service, and after Information Technology moved the existing software to the new RedNMX software, Superion, the County's CAD vendor, informed them that additional funding would be required to purchase software that would automatically send data from the CAD to RedNMX. He advised that the initial quote for the software upgrade was \$9,380, minus a discount in the amount of \$2,000, for a total cost of \$7,380 for the software, plus an annual maintenance fee of \$1,500.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Mr. Webster in response to a request by the Ocean Pines Police Department (OPPD) and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously authorized Emergency Services to seek funding from the Emergency Number Systems Board (ENSB) for the purchase and installation of an EARS Compact Recording Device from Exacom at a total cost of \$5,938.25, plus an additional one-year warranty in the amount of \$104.50. In response to a question by Commissioner Bertino, Mr. Webster explained that the project will replace the voice logging recorder at the OPPD, noting

that as a secondary answering point for 911 calls, the OPPD is required to record all 911 calls transferred to them from the County, which serves as the public safety answering point for all 911 calls in the County.

The Commissioners met with Mr. Webster to discuss the proposed Telephone Fiber Upgrade - Phase II. Mr. Webster advised following approval from the Commissioners on July 3, 2018, Emergency Services staff sought and was awarded grant funding from the ENSB of \$166,718.89 to fund this project. However, on October 31, 2018 Verizon officials advised that eight Tellab circuit cards were omitted from the original proposal, and it will cost an additional \$105,060.67 to purchase this equipment. Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously authorized staff to seek additional funding from the ENSB in the amount of \$105,060.67 to cover this additional cost.

Mr. Webster provided the Commissioners with a P25 Radio System status update, noting that Federal Engineering (FE) analyzed raw data points for Bit Error Rate (BER) and Delivered Audio Quality (DAQ) testing from Harris and identified several discrepancies in the 14 db test grids, which were quickly resolved, but that they had not been provided with the 20 db data, which Harris later agreed to provide. Mr. Webster advised that once FE is able to review that data they will provide their findings, after which they will continue their work to provide recommendations regarding the areas impacted by noise from surrounding systems. In response to a question by Commissioner Bertino, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Kelly Shannahan stated that the County's 90-day contract with FE will be expiring soon, but that FE officials are likely to stretch the contract beyond that timeframe to accommodate the needs of the County.

Pursuant to a request from the local medical examiner and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the Commissioners unanimously authorized Commission President Purnell to sign a letter to Michele Phinney, Director of the Office of Regulation and Policy Coordination for the Maryland Department of Health, to support the proposed compensation increase for fees paid to Deputy Medical Examiners and Forensic Investigators from \$80 to \$120 per case investigated, which will help retain the six investigators covering Somerset, Worcester, and Wicomico Counties.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Kelly Shannahan and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously approved the annual holiday turkey/ham program and agreed to present each of the roughly 674 County employees with a \$30 WalMart gift card for the purchase of a turkey or ham for the holidays at an approximate overall cost of \$20,220, minus the seven County Commissioners who opted to decline this holiday gift. Funds for the gift cards are available within the FY19 budget.

The Commissioners met with Mr. Shannahan to review the Commissioners' proposed meeting schedule and budget schedule for 2019, with Commissioners' meetings generally taking place on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month, except where such dates fall on a legal holiday or other conflicting event. Mr. Shannahan stated the New Year's Day holiday falls on a Tuesday and is followed immediately by the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Winter Conference from January 2-4, so the meetings in January are proposed to take place on the

second and fourth Tuesdays on January 8 and 22, with the legislative session to take place on the fourth Tuesday, January 22. The National Hurricane Conference, which will take place in New Orleans from April 22-25 will not pose a scheduling conflict if attended by any of the Commissioners or staff.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners unanimously approved their schedule of meeting dates and budget schedule for calendar year 2019, as proposed by staff.

In a related matter, Mr. Higgins stated that President Purnell had questioned why the Christmas Eve holiday was only a half-day holiday rather than a full day. After some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to revise the Personnel Rules and Regulations to declare Christmas Eve as a full-day holiday.

The Commissioners answered questions from the press.

Following a motion by Commissioner Bunting, seconded by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously voted to meet in closed session at 11:53 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room to consider acquisition of real property for public purposes, as permitted under the provisions of Section 3-305(b)(3) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. Also present at the closed session were Harold L. Higgins, Chief Administrative Officer; Kelly Shannahan, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer; Maureen Howarth, County Attorney; Kim Moses, Public Information Officer; Tom Perlozzo, Recreation and Parks Director; Ed Tudor, Development Review and Permitting Director; Phil Thompson, Finance Officer; and Kathryn Gordon, Economic Development Deputy Director. Topics discussed included considering the acquisition of real property for public purposes.

The Commissioners adjourned to meet again on November 20, 2018.